THE AMERICAN FLAG ARRIVES IF THE CONSTITUTION DOES NOT[7]

The eventful year 1898 found Fernando Primo de Rivera, uncle of the future dictator of Spain, as the Spanish Governor-General of the Philippines, although shortly thereafter he was succeeded by Governor-General Agustin, with Admiral Montojo in command of the fleet. The same year found General Emilio Aguinaldo in Singapore, whence he had gone after the Pact of Biak-na-bato, which concluded peace between the Filipino insurgents and the Spaniards. And 1898 found Commodore Dewey in command of the American fleet in Hongkong. A condition of comparative quiet prevailed in the Philippines. The Americans declared war on Spain and there was activity on all fronts.

Dewey, who previously had been warned by Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt and was awaiting final orders in Hongkong, on April 25, received from Secretary of the Navy Long the following laconic message: "War has commenced between the United States and Spain. Proceed at once to Philippine Islands. Commence operations particularly against the Spanish fleet. You must capture vessels or destroy. Use utmost endeavour." Aguinaldo on hearing of the war rushed from Singapore to Hongkong, and was later conveyed on an American vessel to the Philippines, where he renewed operations successfully against the Spaniards. And Governor-General Agustin in Manila, under date of April 23, issued the following remarkable manifesto:

A fleet manned by a foreign and uncultured, undisciplined crew has dared to come to these shores for the insane purpose of depriving you of all that means life, honor, and liberty. These North American seamen pretend to be inspired with a courage of which they are incapable, considering it quite proper to substitute the Protestant faith for the Catholic religion which you

[7] **See *Autobiography of George Dewey* (1913).**